



MDTC Annual

EXCELLENCE IN DEFENSE AWARD

NOMINATIONS PACKET

PO Box 66  
Grand Ledge, MI 48837  
Phone: 517-627-3745  
Fax: 517-627-3950  
[www.mdtc.org](http://www.mdtc.org)

*\*highest achievement award ever granted\**

## Excellence in Defense Award Prior Recipients

1993 Robert E. Rutt, Plunkett & Cooney, P.C. \*  
1993 Richard G. Smith, Smith & Martin, P.C. \*  
1994 Richard B. Baxter, Dykema Gossett \*  
1994 John E. S. Scott, Dickinson Wright \*  
1995 Earl J. Cline, Cline, Cline & Griffin, P.C. \*  
1995 David Coey, Dickinson Wright PLLC \*  
1996 John D. Peacock \*  
1997 L. Roland Roegge-Smith, Haughey, Rice & Roegge  
1998 John L. Collins, Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C. \*  
1999 William D. Booth, Plunkett & Cooney, P.C. \*  
1999 John W. McGraw, McGraw, Martin & Heyn P.C. \*  
2000 D.J. Watters, Plunkett & Cooney, P.C. \*  
2001 Robert S. Krause, Dickinson Wright, P.L.L.C. \*  
2002 William W. Jack, Jr., Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge  
2003 James R. Kohl, James R. Kohl P.C.  
2004 John P. Jacobs, John P. Jacobs P.C. \*  
2005 Webb A. Smith, Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith P.C.  
2006 Richard G. Leonard, Rhoades McKee P.C.  
2006 Charles C. Collison, Sr., Collison & Collison P.C. \*  
2007 Lawrence G. Campbell, Dickinson Wright P.L.L.C.  
2008 J. Michael Fordney, Fordney & Coffeey  
2008 Walter P. Griffin, Cline, Cline & Griffin P.C.  
2009 James E. Lozier, Dickinson, Wright, P.L.C.  
2010 Peter L. Dunlap, Fraser Trebilcock Davis & Dunlap P.C.  
2010 Edward M. Kronk, Butzel Long  
2011 + Jonathan E. Martin, Martin, Bacon & Martin, P.C. \*  
2011 James N. Martin, Martin, Bacon & Martin, P.C.  
2012 Brian D. Einhorn, Collins, Einhorn, Farrell & Ulanoff P.C.  
2013 Kathleen A. Lang, Dickinson Wright P.L.L.C.  
2013 Steven B. Galbraith, Galbraith Delie & James P.C.  
2014 Robert P. Siemion, Siemion Huckaby PC  
2015 Thomas W. Cranmer, Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, PLC  
2015 James P. Feeney Dykema Gossett, PLLC  
2016 J. Brian MacDonald, Cline Cline & Griffin, P.C.  
2016 Ralph F. Valitutti, Kitch Drutchas Wagner Valitutti & Sherbrook  
2017 Scott L. Mandel, Foster Swift Collins and Smith PC  
2018 Patrick F. Geary, Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge PC  
2019 Cheryl L. Chandler, Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge PC  
2020 Patricia Nemeth, Nemeth Law, PC  
2021 Michael Sullivan, Collins Einhorn Farrell PC  
2022 Wilson A. Copeland, II, Grier Copeland & Williams PC  
2023 James G. Gross, James G. Gross PLC  
2023 John T. Eads, Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani

The firm at the time of receiving the award

\* *Deceased*

+ *Awarded posthumously*

Updated 1-10-2024 MH

# THE EXCELLENCE IN DEFENSE AWARD

## I. History and Purpose

Established in 1992, the Annual Michigan Defense Trial Counsel (MDTC) “Excellence in Defense Award” is designed to honor those civil defense counsel who have over a number of years through their professionalism, intelligence, creativity, judgment, personality, sensitivity, civility, advocacy skills, community involvement and efforts to educate younger attorneys, promoted the practice of the defense bar and the representation of their clients both in and outside of the courtroom. It also recognizes contributions beyond their normal roles as an advocate.

Your participation in the nominating process is vital, and ensures that all of those who deserve recognition will have the opportunity to be duly considered for this prestigious award.

## II. Nomination Criteria

The sponsor of a nominee must be a current MDTC member in good standing. The sponsor may nominate anyone who meets the following criteria:

- (1) The person has spent at least 75% of his/her time in the defense of civil lawsuits; and
- (2) The person has not spent more than 10% of his/her time representing plaintiffs in civil lawsuits.
- (3) The person is not a sitting MDTC Board of Directors member at the time of nomination.

It is not necessary that the nominee be currently living and/or practicing law.

To ensure the individual given the Excellence in Defense Award is worthy of this honor, the Board of Directors may consider the following or any other factor the Board of Directors deem appropriate for this award:

- A. Number of cases tried or in which appeals were handled.
- B. Creativity and intelligence in the handling of defense matters.
- C. Advocacy skills as reflected in the defense of complex legal matters.
- D. Good judgment in the preparation of trial matters and appeals.
- E. Civic, community and bar activities.

The nomination and any materials supporting a nomination may be submitted by mail, fax, or e-mail to the following address/number/e-mail:

MDTC, PO Box 66, Grand Ledge, MI 48837

Fax 517-627-3950

[info@mdtc.org](mailto:info@mdtc.org)

**The deadline for nominations is October 1<sup>st</sup>.**

## III. Procedure for Selection of Award Winner

- A. A committee entitled Awards Committee shall be selected annually by the President, as provided for in MDTC Bylaw Section 5.6, to review all nominations

submitted. From the nominations submitted, the Awards Committee shall review the nomination and any information submitted, gather any additional information the committee deems necessary, and if more than five nominations are submitted, submit to the Board of Directors the five most deserving candidates. If fewer than five candidates are nominated, all candidates will be submitted to the Board of Directors.

- B. The names of the nominees along with the information received or gathered by the Awards Committee, or a summary of such information for each nominee, shall be submitted by the Awards Committee to the MDTC's Board of Directors for selection of the award winner.

Updated 6-23-17 Board Meeting edits were recommended and approved.  
Updated 11-5-2020 Board Meeting edits were recommended and approved.  
Updated 11-7-2024 Board Meeting edits were recommended and approved.

Updated 11-18-2024 MH

**NOMINATION FORM FOR  
MDTC's ANNUAL  
"EXCELLENCE IN DEFENSE" AWARD**

The deadline for nominations is Friday, October 1, 2021.

All nominations should be sent to MDTC's address at: P.O. Box 66, Grand Ledge, MI 48837.

If you have any questions, contact MDTC at 517-627-3745.

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Law Firm (If applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Practice \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Admission to Bar \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Year Practiced \_\_\_\_\_

Names of law firms and/or other legal positions held and time period when associated with such firm(s) and when working in such other legal position

**Sponsored By:** \_\_\_\_\_

Law Firm Name (If applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a current member of MDTC? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_